

BALANCED INTERVIEW FIELD GUIDE

Pre-Interview

SAFE-TO-TELL ASSESSMENT		DISCLOSURE CATEGORY	
	Alleged perpetrator with access		Unknown
	Unsupportive caregiver		No prior disclosure
	Emotional closeness to alleged perpetrator		Ambiguous disclosure
	Threats, intimidation, manipulation		Clear disclosure
	Family violence, substance abuse		▪ Accidental
	Fearful/skeptical of system		▪ Deliberate
	In this child's shoes, if abused, would I tell?		Recantation

Interview

ENGAGEMENT PHASE			
	Introduce self and role		Option #1 Narrative practice (Topic 1)*
	Establish rapport		Option #1 Narrative practice (Topic 2)
	▪ Child seems relaxed		Option #2 Narrative practice (Topic 1)
	▪ Child responds in sentences		Option #2 Account Exploration Practice
	▪ Child freely discusses neutral topics	*Note: Option #1 Ages 3-5. Option #2 Ages 6 and up.	
ORIENTATION PHASE			
	Review of “Important Things”		Truth-Lie
	▪ Don’t guess (explain)		▪ Truth-Lie difference (practice) (<6)
	▪ Don’t guess (practice)		▪ Lie consequences (<6)
	▪ Don’t understand (explain)		▪ Truth agreement (All)
	▪ Don’t understand (practice)		Promise to (stronger) or Agree to (softer): “Tell about true things and things that really happened.”
	▪ If I make a mistake (explain)		
	▪ If I make a mistake (practice)		
	▪ I wasn’t there. (explain)		
INTRODUCING TOPIC PHASE			
	Open-minded, escalating approach		
	Strategies used		
	▪ Refer to earlier interview statement		▪ Body part inventory
	▪ Prior disclosure: use <u>escalation questions</u>		▪ Touch survey
	▪ Family/caregiver questions		▪ Other:
	▪ Feelings/faces		
ELICITING DETAILS PHASE			
	Balanced, open-minded approach		Wait for child
	Funnel questioning		Focus on one event at a time
	▪ Encourage free narrative		Seek corroborative details (5 senses?)
	▪ Limit yes/no questions		Explore other explanations
	▪ Recycle back up		Use <u>Account Exploration</u> (Option #2).
CLOSURE PHASE			
	Recap		
	Assess safety		
	Assess risk of recantation		
	Address child’s concerns		
	Focus on neutral topic		

ESCALATION QUESTIONS

1. **Tell me why** I am talking to you today. (Why do you think I am talking to you today? Adaptation: **Tell me why** your mother brought you here?)
2. **It's really important** for us to talk about why I came to talk to you today. (Adaptation: **It's really important** to tell why your mother brought you here.)
3. I heard **you talked to "someone"** (last week). Tell me what you talked about.
4. I heard **"someone" is worried** that something may have happened to you. What are they worried about? (Adaptation: Has something happened to make your mother worry about you?)
5. I heard that someone may have **bothered you**. Tell me everything about that.
6. I heard that someone may have done **something that wasn't right** to you. Tell me everything about that.

Note: For questions #3 and #4, it may be appropriate to use a person's name instead of "someone."
(From Tom Lyon, 2004).

Consider open ended/broad inquires if the child shares a response.:

1. Tell me about that.
2. Tell me all about that.
3. Tell me as much as you can about that...or proceed to Account Exploration steps below.

Account Exploration

Use AE only after socializing child to AE process. Perform practice interview regarding a safe event.

If child reveals information during your introduction of the topic of abuse consider the following:

- Establish whether **1** event or if more than **1** event occurred.
- If multiple events occurred explore a specific event. "The last time." If there was just one event, "at mom's house," explore that event.

Engage Child in specific AE steps:

1. **Connect to the event:** "Think about when that happened."
 2. **Report completely:** "After you have thought about what happened, tell me about it from the beginning to the middle to the end. Tell me everything, even the little things."
- Only ask follow-up/clarification questions when child has exhausted the narrative.
 - Allow for pauses. Allowing the child to think without interviewer interruptions.

CAUTION:

- During the connect to event phase, do not use words like "imagine" or "pretend".
- Do not ask the child to connect to an abusive event that did not occur. Example: "Think about what touching would be like if '_____' did touching. Tell me about that from beginning, to middle, to end."